

Hill Gunners Draw Bead on TV

By Drew Pearson

For various reasons, it looks as if television is going to be up against the congressional gun this year. Here are some of the solons who are shooting at it.

Sharpshooter No. 1 is Sen. Tom Dodd (D-Conn.), who blames television for our scandalous juvenile delinquency increase. He is supported by Sen. Ken Keating (R-N.Y.). In tough language, they have warned the networks that there has been absolutely no change in the diet of crime and sex being dished out to the public—especially by NBC and ABC.

Sharpshooters No. 2 are Reps. Manny Celler (N.Y.) and Henry Reuss (Wis.), with Sen. Phil Hart (Mich.), all Democrats, who want to probe CBS's acquisition of 80 per cent of the New York Yankees. They wonder how other ball clubs will be able to get TV publicity when the Yankees are owned by one of the major TV networks.

Sharpshooter No. 3 is Sen. Barry Goldwater, who claims that the networks have been unfair to him.

Sharpshooters No. 4 are Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.) and Sen. Bill Proxmire (D-



Pearson

Wis.), who point to the hookup between defense industries and the TV industry.

This may be the most important criticism of all. For here the congressional shooters point out that not merely a few ball games, but the question of the military budget, and indirectly of peace and war, is at stake.

Influence on Public

The possibility that CBS might favor the Yanks on TV would affect box office receipts or who would play in the World Series. But it would not affect the fate of nations.

The close link between TV stations and big defense industries, however, could. It becomes extremely important, therefore, to know how much these defense-owned stations are influencing the public's mind regarding bigger defense budgets, continuation of obsolete weapons, intensifying the cold war, criticizing the policy of coexistence; failure to criticize cost-plus contracts, Pentagon inefficiencies, or any number of everyday problems that link public information with war and peace.

Even if the TV stations owned by defense industries lean over backward to be fair and impartial—as it is assumed CBS will do regarding baseball — no TV station should be in the embarrass-

ing conflict-of-interest position where it has to make these decisions.

Yet the National Broadcasting Company is wholly owned by RCA, one of the top defense contractors. General Electric, the No. 3 defense contractor, owns the most powerful radio and TV complex in central New York. Westinghouse, a major contractor, owns a sizable TV-radio network of its own—and, incidentally, does an excellent public service job. General Tire and Rubber, which manufactures the Polaris missile, owns some of the major TV and radio stations in the Nation; so does American Aviation, another defense contractor.

It will be interesting to see what the probers of links between TV and baseball also do about links between TV and defense contractors.

Speaking of baseball, this column's report that some D.C. TV stations failed to carry the special interview with Secretary of State Dean Rusk on the Viet-Nam crisis because of baseball caused sparks to fly.

Interview Filmed

The Rusk interview, filmed after the Secretary of State had been up most of the night and was dog tired, was scheduled for network airing at 7:30 p.m. WTOP, the CBS outlet in Washington, had a

ball game scheduled and aired the Rusk interview between 11:30 p.m. and 12:30 a.m.

WRC, the NBC-owned and operated station, did not show Rusk at the network time, but did show him in prime time, between 9 and 10 p.m.

On Aug. 5, at the height of the Vietnamese crisis, with American bombers having just returned from raiding North Viet-Nam PT boat installations and the world wondering whether Red China would retaliate, President Johnson delivered a vitally important speech at Syracuse at noon.

Unlike the other networks, ABC did not carry the President's speech. Instead, it carried two game shows, "Get the Message" and "The Missing Link."

CBS did better by Sen. Goldwater and the Republicans one week later. It interrupted its entire network at 2:23 p.m. Aug. 12, to carry the entire news conference of Sen. Goldwater, Gen. Eisenhower, Nixon, and Miller. It lasted 61 minutes until 3:24, much to the indignation of regular viewers who missed their favorite program "Password" and squawked loudly to local stations.

Such are some of the headaches of TV and radio programmers.

© 1964, Bell-McClure Syndicate, Inc.